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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Short Inspection

**St Joseph's Primary School
Lisburn**

Inspected: April 2008

ST JOSEPH'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, LISBURN, CO ANTRIM, BT27 4XE (403-0897)

St Joseph's Primary School is located in Castle Street, Lisburn. The majority of the children come from the town and the surrounding area. There has been a significant increase in numbers over the past five years. Approximately 7% of the children are entitled to free school meals and 13% identified by the school as requiring additional support for their learning in English and mathematics.

The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents and the teaching staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Of the 137 questionnaires issued to the parents, 50 (36%) were returned to the Department of Education (DE), of which 30 contained additional written comments. Almost all of the parental questionnaires and written comments indicated high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of school life. A small number of issues raised by parents were discussed with the Principal. One teacher responded to the questionnaire; the written comments were wholly positive. The inspectors also met with a group of year 6 children who reported that they feel safe and happy in school and know what to do in the event of a concern.

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection in the school is very good. The school has procedures in place which implement the guidance outlined in the relevant DE circulars. The governors, staff, parents and children are fully aware of the school's procedures and have access to a range of effective policies which guide the work of the school. The school is aware that to fully implement Circular 2003/13, 'Welfare and Protection of Pupils Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003' consultation with parents needs to be developed further. Among the strengths are:

- the high quality of the working relationships based on mutual respect and understanding throughout the school;
- the excellent behaviour of the well-motivated and articulate children, who respond positively to their teachers;
- the contribution made by the teaching and support staff to the children's well-being and learning experiences;
- the effective leadership of the pastoral care co-ordinator;
- the effective ways of communicating with all parents and working alongside other agencies; and
- the commitment of the school to promoting diversity and inclusion, and the educational and welfare support offered to children and families of ethnic minority communities.

The school gives very good attention to promoting health and well-being, including opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity. There are policies and programmes in place, for example healthy breaks, links with external agencies helping to make food experiences real for children and opportunities for practical cookery, which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

The school has significant strengths which include:

- the high quality of the teaching observed; the majority of which was consistently good or very good, with approximately one-fifth of the lessons characterised by excellence;
- the good standards achieved by most of the children, in line with their abilities;
- the high quality of the teaching and provision for special educational needs based on the effective use of performance data to inform and improve the quality of learning and teaching;
- the conscientious staff and their commitment to the professional development and evaluation of learning and teaching strategies and their involvement in a wide range of valuable educational initiatives;
- the effective and child-centred leadership of the Principal who has created a synergistic culture of school improvement through self-evaluation in the interests of the children's learning; and
- the strong support of the governors and parents for the Principal and staff of the school which enhances further the central role that the school has within the community which it serves.

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in this school is very good. The educational and pastoral needs of the children are being well met. The parents and local community can have confidence in the school's capacity for sustained self-improvement.

No follow-up inspection is required.

A number of quantitative terms are used in the report. In percentages, the terms correspond as follows:-

- more than 90% - almost/nearly all
- 75%-90% - most
- 50%-74% - a majority
- 30%-49% - a significant minority
- 10%-29% - a minority
- less than 10% - very few/a small number.

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